

Local Schools



[TOP](#)

Superintendent Spends Day as High School Student

NOVEMBER 22ND 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Superintendent Spends Day as High School Student

Poplar Bluff Superintendent Scott Dill could be spotted in plain clothes with a school-issued backpack off Barron Road at a quarter to 7 a.m. on a brisk autumn Thursday, waiting for the bus to pick him up... to go to Senior High.

He contemplated what may pose the biggest challenge for him at this stage in life, such as skipping that second cup of coffee in order to limit his fluid intake.

Despite the careful consideration, he failed to bring something to write in and had to visit the Giving Closet for a notebook first thing, according to assistant librarian Cindy Webb.

Dill was provided a full class schedule because he committed to spending an entire day as a PBHS student.

“As a superintendent, I’m afforded the opportunity to make decisions every day that impact the lives of kids, and my focus—in concert with the administration and board—is, and has to be, what’s best for students,” said Dill in an interview the day before his experiment. “My goal is to become better attuned to the needs of our kids and have a deeper appreciation for what their lives within our school system entail.

What he learned quickly was students were rather interested in what he was up to and why. Zac Batton, who was alerted in advance by Dill’s teenage daughter, said he thought the bus ride in particular was “pretty cool.” Zac, a senior, was rumored that Dill had Spanish II with him, considering he heard the superintendent took German in high school.

Attending concert choir class together, sophomore Caitlin Dollins was curious to see if Dill really could sight read the music. And while the superintendent was fully prepared to eat alone, Caitlin ended up welcoming him to her table.

“A couple friends of mine had the idea to invite him to sit with us at lunch if he had D lunch, so I made sure to ask him before anyone else could get the chance to ask,” Caitlin explained. “I really wanted to get his opinion of what was going on in the school system, but I didn’t want to make him feel uncomfortable or different, as that wouldn’t really be in the spirit of the project. So we just talked about classes and which teachers he liked.”

One assignment that Dill found invigorating, he noted, was when he had to write an essay in Mike Sowatzke’s American history class about whether he believed industrialist Andrew Carnegie was a hero or a villain. Dill felt the correct answer was probably a combination, but he was challenged to pick a side to compose a more cohesive analysis.

Having served in a leadership capacity for so long, Dill realized he had grown accustomed to helping solve real world problems and had forgotten what it is like to engage in an intellectual exercise for the sole sake of learning, he mentioned.

Sowatzke was excited for the opportunity to leave an impression on his boss, he said, and then he remembered it was his department’s week to participate in PB Writes in preparation for EOC and ACT testing. Rather than delivering an engaging lesson, the instructor ended up spending the majority of time bouncing from desk to desk answering students’ questions, but that is part of the profession, too.

“It’s good for people to see all the stuff we have to do in a given day to keep everyone on task,” Sowatzke commented, and reflected on what has changed since his secondary education a decade ago. “Instead of a teacher’s role just being teacher—you get your grade and that’s it—we are actively watching out to make sure kids aren’t failing.”

In a follow-up interview, Dill stated this experience would live with him forever, which was especially important to him considering he graduated from high school in the western part of the state – roughly a quarter of a century ago. While today’s technology integration equips faculty with more tools at their disposal, he observed, quality instruction is still quality instruction.

“We really have good teachers doing good work,” Dill pointed out. “Some people that I had previously considered reserved or quiet came alive in front of a classroom, and I got

to see them at their brilliant best, helping kids.”

After several 47-minute periods with six minutes in between, and only a 25-minute lunch break, Dill said he felt like he had run a marathon, constantly shifting subjects as well as dispositions. While he gathered his belongings to go home, some students were gearing up for basketball practice, and various other extracurricular activities on campus.

“Whoever said, ‘Youth is wasted on the young,’ hasn’t put in their academic day in a while,” Dill joked. “And we ask our students to do this day in and day out, rain or shine – for 13 school years.

“It could truly enhance a person’s ability to effectively facilitate the education and protection of our kids if we were to walk a mile in their shoes, which I have done today,” said Dill, reaffirming his earlier sentiment, perhaps with a touch more conviction this time around.

Pictured: Superintendent Scott Dill (maroon hoodie) practices songs for the Community Thanksgiving Dinner with concert choir students in music teacher Joshua Allen’s class.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Karmen Carson Honored as Unsung Hero

NOVEMBER 17TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Karmen Carson Honored as Unsung Hero

Poplar Bluff Middle School teacher Karmen Carson received the 2017 Unsung Heroes award of the Missouri State Teachers Association on Thursday, Nov. 9, in Columbia.

Nominated by field service coordinators, the award acknowledged about 30 members who made a “substantive yet unrecognized contribution” to the organization’s mission: to advocate for and empower public educators so they can teach, according to the award letter.

“You’ve quietly served without any expectation of recognition,” wrote Bruce Moe, MSTA executive director. “But we’ve noticed.”

An educator of nearly 20 years, Carson has served as president of the Poplar Bluff chapter of MSTA since 2009. The MSTA is an organization made up of more than 47,000 educators statewide.

Dr. Amy Jackson, R-I assistant superintendent of personnel, congratulated Carson, stating: “I am proud of your dedication and the work you do that is unnoticed by some, but not all!”

Pictured: Fourth grade math and science teacher Karmen Carson is presented the Unsung Heroes of MSTA award by executive director Bruce Moe (left) and state president Brett Hoch.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Southeast Missouri All-District Band

NOVEMBER 17TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Southeast Missouri All-District Band

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Several Poplar Bluff High School band students were named to the Southeast Missouri All-District Band on Tuesday, Nov. 7, during an audition in Jackson.

Performing as members of the Jazz Band on Nov. 18 in Cape Girardeau, Zac Batton will serve as lead alto, Michael Ward - lead tenor, and Joseph Pickard will play the trumpet. In the Concert Band on Feb. 10 at Three Rivers College, Destiny Ackerman will play the flute and Breeanna Helton will play clarinet. Cody Daughertee has been selected to play the trumpet in both the Jazz and Concert Band.

Band director Stephen Winters said the students worked hard on their music, some practicing for six months.

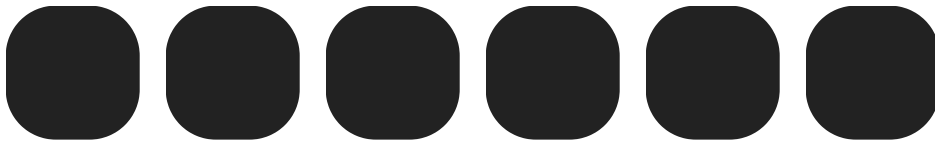
(From left) Cody Daughertee, Joseph Pickard, Michael Ward and Zac Batton of the Poplar Bluff Studio Jazz Band, Breeanna Helton and Destiny Ackerman of the Wind Ensemble!

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director,
Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Dentist Takes Up Collection for Giving Closet

NOVEMBER 17TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Dentist Takes Up Collection for Giving Closet

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Dr. Mike Price delivered several boxes of personal hygiene items to the Giving Closet on Thursday, Nov. 9, after taking up a month-long collection at his clinic, the Family Dentistry of Poplar Bluff.

One patient of the dental office included 24 bars of homemade soap with a note that read: “When I was in high school, my dad had a terrible accident and lost his left arm. We got a care basket during Christmas – it was all we had then.”

Price said his hope is for beneficiaries of the Giving Closet to one day pay it forward when they are in a position to do so. The Giving Closet was established at Poplar Bluff High School last year under the Bright Futures banner to help students in need with clothing, toiletries and classroom supplies.

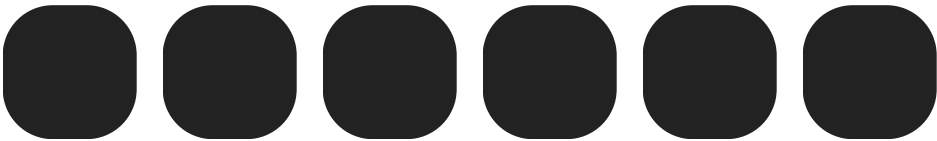
Pictured: PBHS librarian Marci Priest (left) and assistant librarian Cindy Webb, who manage the Giving Closet, accept a donation from local dentist and avid school supporter, Dr. Mike Price.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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O’Neal Awarded Ag in the Classroom Grant

NOVEMBER 09TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

O'Neal Awarded Ag in the Classroom Grant

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - O'Neal Librarian Ashley Robertson was recently awarded \$250 through the Missouri Farm Bureau Federation's Ag in the Classroom program designed to walk students through the cow to plate process.

Under the grant entitled You Scream, I Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream: Cow to Ice Cream, third graders will learn about how beef and dairy products are processed. Robertson further noted: "Students will have the opportunity to turn ice cream to butter. The final project will involve eating ice cream to celebrate what we have learned."

Supplementary to the unit of study, the elementary school is receiving weekly updates about the growth of a calf and the dairy farm it lives on through an adoption program of the St. Louis District Dairy Council.

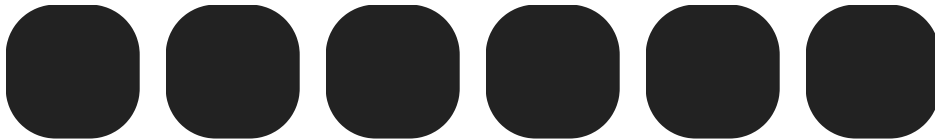
Pictured: Michael Gross, Butler County Farm Bureau president, presents Ashley Robertson with a check in October.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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